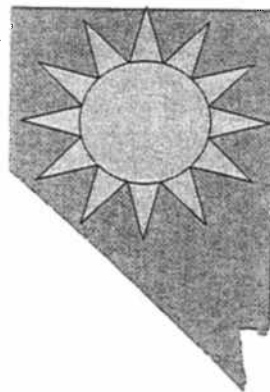


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STATE PUBLICATIONS

# NEVADA CLIMATE SUMMARY

## May 2000

### Volume 17, Number 5

May was yet another mild month in Nevada, with the nine month period from September 1999 to May 2000 the warmest in over 100 years of record in the West, and April and May the warmest back to back 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> months in the South. For example, Las Vegas averaged 7.1 degrees above normal in April and 6.8 above in May. To add to the heat in the South a couple of 108° days almost broke the May all-time high of 109° set at the Airport in 1951.

Rainfall was virtually non-existent in the South, but above normal in the North and East, with generally below normal amounts elsewhere. For example, Las Vegas had only a trace, and Winnemucca 1.35", or about twice normal. Ely had an above normal 1.64" while Reno had only .23" or 1/3 of the usual. The wettest reporting site in the State was Marlette Lake with 3.50", Jarbidge had 2.58", Incline 2.26", and Flanigan 2.00".

Water Year precipitation is now a little above normal in the North and Northeast, but below elsewhere. East slope Sierra Nevada precipitation ranges from only 60-65% of normal in the Walker River Area, 75-80% in the Carson, and 80-85% in the Tahoe-Truckee Areas. Since the Water Year began October 1<sup>st</sup>, the wettest site has been Mt. Rose Ski Bowl with 45.30" or 87% of normal, while Marlette Lake has had 27.10", or 83%. Percentage-wise Mina has had 135% of normal, with 4.95". The driest reporting station is Hawthorne with only 1.17" (31% of normal). Yerington had 1.49" for only 38% of the usual.

The big weather news in May was the sharp cold snap during mid-month that caused a good deal of tree and plant damage in most of Nevada. For example, the mercury fell to 12° at Reese River Hoard, Boies Ranch and Middlegate, 15° at Montgomery Pass, Manhattan, San Jacinto, Red Rock Valley, Charleston, Wabuska and

the Lister Ranch near Pioche. It was only 16° at Gabbs, 17° at Cold Springs Cruz and Cathedral Gorge and 18° at Smith Owens, Lemmon Valley Klump, Elko and Belmont.

Buds and leaves that had been lulled into early growth by the mild winter and record warm April and May were zapped when the cold snap hit. Even though the warm/cold scenario is not unusual, the magnitude of the difference was generally unheard of. It has been colder in May but this was not preceded by weeks and even months of unusually mild weather.

NOTE 1: What was Nevada's Hottest month?

July 1931 fills the bill at most locations. Some records that still stand are 118° at Las Vegas, 108° at Winnemucca and Minden, 106° at Reno and 105° at Austin.

Nevada's hottest day was measured at Laughlin with 125° on June 29, 1994. During the 9-day period from June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup> the highs never fell below 120°! Unofficially the mercury rose to 128° at the bottom of the Black Canyon Boulder Dam Site in July 1931. No record of the instrumentation and exposure are available to make it official, but it was hot!!

NOTE 2:

Nevada's most intense recorded rainfall occurred on May 29, 1896 at Cloverdale Ranch, about half way between Gabbs and Tonopah. Observer F.G. Troy reported 8.50" in one hour, with 6.50" in a half-hour! He also reported that large hailstones stripped trees of leaves and that the first half-hour was "a regular waterspout" with much flooding. The Cloverdale Ranch still exists but now is abandoned. No one lived nearby in 1896, nor do they in 1995. Such an old record is hard to verify, but newspaper reports can help.

The Carson Weekly wrote, "Friday morning hailstones fell nearly an inch in circumference and the last fall was accompanied by a deluge of rain, the like of which is seldom seen. The Carson River rose two feet".

The Walker Lake Bulletin reported not only rain, but weather that also caused transportation problems, "A washout between Wabuska and the Reservation last Friday caused four cars on the north-bound train to leave the track. Nobody was hurt.

Hailstones as large as quail eggs fell in Hawthorne last Friday. It sounded as if old Jupiter Pluvius was throwing stones on the house roofs".

The Carson Morning News observed, "Friday's hail storm was very disastrous to the west side of Carson Valley mowing down the alfalfa and killing chickens. On one ranch, eighteen fowls succumbed".

The Free Press of Elko reported, "The heavy storm of last Friday did considerable damage in Huntington and on the South Fork. Mr. Martin had just finished seeding his grain. The rain washed it all out. The fruit trees on Walther's Ranch were also badly damaged by hailstones".

The Central Nevadan stated, "A cloud burst occurred at Empire on last Thursday afternoon. A torrent rushed into the river near Morgan Hill, taking with it some 1,000 tons of tailings".

It seems that F.G. Troy made an accurate observation of the effects of a very severe thunderstorm, of which there were several reported Statewide that day. Unfortunately most of them missed the rain gages that were extant in those early years.